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The proliferation of community power structure studies and their results have led many social researchers to the conclusion that the principle explanation for many diverse findings rests with the disciplinary bias of the researchers. The purpose of this study was to make some tentative effort at explaining power structure characteristics as a function of community characteristics, or to show that differentiated communities have differentiated power structures. Two small Texas communities were selected for examination with a population range of 8,500 to 11,500 because they differed consistently on the following characteristics: (1) ethnic and occupation composition, (2) occupational mobility, (3) metropolitan influence, and (4) population increase. Data from related research was also utilized for comparative analysis. The results tentatively support the hypothesis that as the characteristics of a community vary, the visibility characteristic of the power structure also varies. The findings also suggest that additional research would indicate similar relationships between power structure characteristics and community characteristics. (DK)

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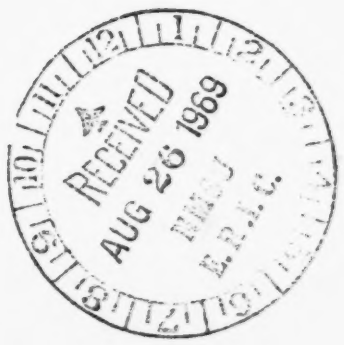

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND POWER STRUCTURE CHARACTERISTICS: AN EXAMINATION OF SMALLER COMMUNITIES*

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Introduction

There has been a proliferation of community power structure studies since Floyd Hunter's pioneering effort in Regional City in the early 1950's.[1] Most students of community power are familiar with the positional, reputational and issue analysis methodologies and the inherent virtues and defects in each. For example, Walton has demonstrated that the disciplinary orientation of researchers is linked to their methodology and, consequently, to their results in a causal sequence.[2] Walton argues persuasively that he has demonstrated a systematic bias; this leads to the conclusion that the principal explanation for differences in the findings of power structure studies has been these sources of bias. True, political scientists, who usually use the issue analysis methodology, usually find a pluralistic power structure while sociologists, who usually use the reputational methodology, usually find an elitist or monolithic power structure.[3] However, this explanation in and of itself is too simplistic. An alternative hypothesis, and one which has only recently been investigated empirically, is that differentiated communities have differentiated power structures. The purpose of this paper thus is twofold: (1) to present some empirical findings from two Texas communities, and (2) to make some tentative effort at explaining power structure characteristics as a function of community characteristics.

Research Sites

Two communities in Texas within a population range of 8,500 to 11,500 were selected primarily because they differed consistently on the following characteristics: (a) ethnic and occupation composition, (b) occupational mobility,[4] (c) metropolitan influence, and (d) population increase. Oiltown was located in West Texas in one of the largest oil-producing counties of the United States. It had a population of 11,135 which represented a 238.0 percent increase over the 1950 population. It was during the 1950-60 time period that the region reached its height in oil production. Less than one percent of the community's population was employed in agriculture; the occupational mobility index indicated that the proportion of the labor force in manufacturing occupations was increasing rapidly. Oiltown had a very low proportion of nonwhites (2.4 percent) as well as a very low proportion of families with a Spanish surname (3.9 percent). The proportion of families with incomes under $3,000 was low and the proportion with incomes over $10,000 was high; this resulted in a median family income of $6,432. The median number of school years completed was 11.7. In addition to the above characteristics, Oiltown was within 45 miles of two metropolitan areas.

Farmersville was located in Southwest Texas in a fertile agricultural region. Its population of 9,101 had increased only 26.4 percent since 1950. Farmersville had a low proportion of nonwhites; however, 74.4 percent of its population had a Spanish surname. It had a higher proportion of persons employed in agriculture than Oiltown, and the population had experienced very little change to manufacturing since 1950. In contrast to Oiltown,

over 66 percent of Farmersville's families had an annual income of less than $3,000, and a very small percent had an income over $10,000; this resulted in a median family income of only $2,190. In addition, the median education level of the population was 8.9 years. Finally, Farmersville was over one hundred miles from the nearest metropolitan area, and, consequently, was assumed to be under little metropolitan influence.

Selection of Respondents

Beginning with the Manager of the Chamber of Commerce of both communities and continuing with the chain-referral technique, each respondent was asked to name those individuals whom he considered to be leaders on many types of issues and the individuals who were leaders in special areas of community life. After 31 interviews in Oiltown and 30 in Farmersville yielded lists of leaders with far more duplications than new names, the interviews were terminated. It was then assumed that to be a general leader an individual would have to receive more than the mean number of nominations. Utilizing the mean number of nominations for those who received two or more nominations as a cut-off point, 20 general leaders receiving 68 percent of the nominations were identified in Oiltown and 13 receiving 60 percent of the nominations in Farmersville.

Power Structure Characteristics

One of the major criticisms of the reputational approach is that the earlier researchers assumed that the leaders identified acted as a group when in fact they have been merely an aggregate of individuals.[5] Sociograms

and the sociometric statistic ratio of interest indicated that the power structures of Oiltown and Farmersville possessed group-like characteristics. Farmersville's power structure was slightly more cohesive, whereas, Oiltown's power structure had a small cohesive grouping of leaders within the larger grouping of top leaders. Both communities had leaders with a wide scope of influence. This was determined by the significant correlation between the general leaders and the limited interest leaders; however, the leaders of Oiltown were nominated in slightly more areas of community life than the leaders of Farmersville.

The concept differential perception refers to the fact that different segments of the population perceive different individuals as being leaders. Bonjean developed a typology of community leaders based on visibility.[6] The typology is based on the assumption that general leaders are the most qualified to perceive others of their kind. Bonjean analyzed the choices of higher ranking leaders and those of lower ranking leaders; he concluded that their choices were substantially different. Thus, the following typology was developed:

a. Visible Leader---the leader who is assigned approximately the same amount of power by both leaders and non-leaders.

b. Concealed Leader---the leader who is assigned more power by the leaders than the non-leaders.

c. Symbolic Leader---the leader who is assigned more power by the non-leaders than the leaders.

The visible leader is highly recognized by both leaders and non-leaders as being influential in the community. On the other hand, the concealed leader

is known better to the leaders than the community at large. The symbolic leader is attributed more power by the general public than the leaders.

This study analyzed the perception of leaders by the leaders and by the non-leaders. A comparison of the ranking of the leaders by the leaders and the non-leaders yielded a Spearman's rank correlation which indicated that the power structures of both communities were recognized by both the leaders and the non-leaders. Eighty percent of the leaders in Oiltown and eighty-five percent of the leaders in Farmersville were classified as visible leaders because they were attributed approximately the same amount of power by both the leaders and the non-leaders. In addition, it was concluded that concealed and symbolic leaders existed in these small communities; that is, the leaders attributed more power to some individuals (concealed leaders) than the non-leaders did, and the non-leaders attributed more power to a few other individuals (symbolic leaders) than the leaders did.[7] However, in general, the power structures of both communities were highly visible. Recently, researchers have hypothesized that differentiated communities have differentiated power structures; thus, if the communities studied are different from those studied in provious research along a number of variables, one would expect a difference in power structures.

Community Characteristics

Duncan and Schnore were among the first to suggest that there exists an association between types of communities and types of power structures.[8] Shortly thereafter, Jonassen and Peres conducted a study of eighty-eight Ohio communities in which they examined eighty-two variables.[9] More

recently, Bonjean, Browning, and Carter have investigated the variation of seventy-nine selected indicators among the 3,101 adjacent United States counties.[10] From their research, they concluded that factor analyses indicated communities vary along specific dimensions.[11] Socioeconomic Status, Family Life Cycle, Governmental Revenues and Expenditures, Residential Mobility, and Urbanism were among the key differentiating dimensions suggested for use by Bonjean, et al.

In the current research, data indicative of each of the above dimensions were collected for four communities: Oiltown, Farmersville, Burlington, North Carolina, and Indiana City. Burlington was the community being studied when Bonjean developed his leadership typology.[12] Indiana City was the community studied by Miller and Dirksen when they replicated Bonjean's study.[13] The raw data of the dimensions for each of the four communities are found in Table 1. The communities were then ranked on each factor composing each dimension; these rankings for each community were totaled and the final rankings were determined (see Table 2). A summary of the communities' final rankings along all five dimensions is presented in Table 3. In terms of these dimensions, Oiltown County possessed such characteristics as a high Socioeconomic Status (which included a very high median family income and a high percent of sound dwellings); in addition, the county spent and received three times as much money per capita as any of the other three counties. Also, Oiltown had twice as many new dwellings as the other counties as well as a higher percent of new residents. Indiana County consistently ranked second on four of the five

Table 1. Community Dimensions for Oiltown, Farmersville, Monroe and Indiana Counties

Community Dimensions*	Oiltown County	Farmersville County	Monroe County	Indiana County
I. Socioeconomic Status				
A. Median income of families	$6,391	$2,314	$5,379	$5,395
B. Dwelling condition	82.6%	30.0%	65.1%	63.3%
C. Percent of units with telephones	69.1%	32.5%	77.1%	82.3%
II. Family Life Cycle				
A. Percent 21 and over	53.1%	47.0%	58.6%	57.9%
B. Median Age	23.0 yrs.	19.1 yrs.	27.4 yrs.	24.4 yrs.
C. Percent under 5 years	14.8%	14.9%	11.2%	10.7%
III. Governmental Revenues and Expenditures				
A. Local expenditures per person in active population	$776,520	$168,950	$125,040	$210,380
B. Local revenues per person in active population	54,721	16,400	13,539	18,140
IV. Residential Mobility				
A. Dwelling newness	67.7%	19.9%	33.1%	32.2%
B. Percent migrants from different county	54.6%	14.0%	12.5%	30.9%
V. Urbanism				
A. Heterogeneity	6.9	17.8	52.2	7.1

*A description of each of the factors composing the community dimensions can be found in Charles M. Bonjean, Harley L. Browning, and Lewis F. Carter, "Detailed Descriptions of Items, Populations, and Code Schedule for County and SMSA Tape Sample Used in Factor Analyses of United States Counties, Communities, and Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas," The University of Texas at Austin.

Table 2. County Rankings on Community Dimensions and Factors

Community Dimensions and Factors	Oiltown County	Farmersville County	Monroe County	Indiana County
	- - - - - Ranked from high to low - - - - - -			
I. Socioeconomic Status				
A. Median income of families	1	4	3	2
B. Dwelling condition	1	4	2	3
C. Percent of units with telephone	3	4	2	1
Total	5	12	7	6
Final Ranking	1	4	3	2
II. Family Life Cycle				
A. Percent 21 and over	3	4	1	2
B. Median age	3	4	1	2
C. Percent under 5 years	2	1	3	4
Total	8	9	5	8
Final Ranking	2.5	4.0	1.0	2.5
III. Governmental Revenues and Expenditures				
A. Local expenditures per person in active population	1	3	4	2
B. Local revenues per person in active population	1	3	4	2
Total	2	6	8	4
Final Ranking	1	3	4	2
IV. Residential Mobility				
A. Dwelling newness	1	4	2	3
B. Percent migrants from different county	1	3	4	2
Total	2	7	6	5
Final Ranking	1	4	3	2
V. Urbanism				
A. Heterogeneity	4	2	1	3
Final Ranking	4	2	1	3

Table 3. County Final Ranking on Community Dimensions

	Community Dimensions	Oiltown County	Farmersville County	Monroe County	Indiana County
I.	Socioeconomic Status	1	4	3	2
II.	Family Life Cycle	2.5	4	1	2.5
III.	Governmental Revenues and Expenditures	1	3	4	2
IV.	Residential Mobility	1	4	3	2
V.	Urbanism	4	2	1	3

dimensions dropping to third place only on Urbanism. From the raw data in Table 1, it appears that Indiana County is most similar to Alamance County, especially on the following factors: median income of families, dwelling condition, percent of population 21 and over, percent of population under five years, and dwelling newness. On the other hand, Farmersville County consistently ranked last along four of the five dimensions and did not possess any significant similarity to the other three counties.

The Relationship Between Power Structure Characteristics and Community Characteristics

It was hypothesized in this study that as the characteristics of communities vary, the characteristics of their power structures also vary. The relationship between the community characteristics---Socioeconomic Status, Family Life Cycle, Governmental Revenues and Expenditures, Residential Mobility, and Urbanism---and the visibility of the power structures were examined. The proportion of visible leaders that were identified in each of the four communities are indicated in Table 4. Farmersville and Oiltown had a much higher proportion of visible leaders than either Burlington or Indiana City; thus, in Farmersville and Oiltown, in contrast to either of the other two communities, the non-leaders were more aware of the leaders in their community. Table 5 relates the visibility of the power structure to the characteristics of the community. First, limiting the discussion to the power structure characteristics of Oiltown, Indiana City, and Burlington,[14] it is noted that Oiltown had the highest percent of visible leaders with Indiana City and Burlington ranking second and third,

Table 4. Proportion of Visible, Concealed, and Symbolic Leaders in Each Community

Community	Proportion of Leaders Classified as Visible	Proportion of Leaders Classified as Concealed	Proportion of Leaders Classified as Symbolic	Total
	- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Percent - - - - - - - - - - - - - -			
Oiltown	80.0	10.0	10.0	100 (N=20)
Farmersville	84.6	7.7	7.7	100 (N=13)
Burlington	29.4	35.3	35.3	100 (N=17)
Indiana City	31.6	42.1	26.3	100 (N=19)

Table 5. Visibility of the Power Structure Compared with Community Characteristics

Communities Ranked in Order of Highest Proportion of Visible Leaders	Rankings on Community Dimensions				
	Socioeconomic Status	Family Life Cycle	Government Revenues and Expenditures	Residential Mobility	Urbanism
Farmersville	4	4	3	4	2
Oiltown	1	2.5	1	1	4
Indiana City	2	2.5	2	2	3
Burlington	3	1	4	3	1

respectively. It is also noted that Oiltown, Indiana City, and Burlington ranked first, second, and third, respectively, on the community characteristics of Socioeconomic Status, Governmental Revenues and Expenditures, and Residential Mobility. Thus, it appears that the higher the Socioeconomic Status, Governmental Revenues and Expenditures, and Residential Mobility of a community, the greater the visibility of the power structure of the community. The relationship between the Family Life Cycle and Urbanism of a community and the power structure's visibility appears to be less well defined. The data seem to indicate a trend of reverse order with Burlington ranking first on these two dimensions. In substance, the visibility of the power structure of these three communities seems to be strongly associated with Socioeconomic Status, Governmental Revenue and Expenditure, and Residential Mobility.

Farmersville ranked lowest on the majority of the factors differentiating the communities, while at the same time it had a higher percent of visible leaders than the other communities. Prior to the time of the study there was increased activity concerning mass voter registration, voter education programs, and public issue analyses in Farmersville. Thus, the authors suggest that in view of the high proportion of visible leaders in Farmersville, the aforementioned activities may have increased the community's awareness of the leaders of the community and the composition of the power structure.

Other Power Structure Characteristics and Theoretical Implications

From further study of Oiltown and Farmersville, additional power structure characteristics were obtained for these two communities.[15] It was determined that Oiltown's power structure, in addition to being overt in nature or visible to the community at large, also had more formally constituted power and was less group-like in its characteristics or less cohesive. In contrast, Farmersville's power structure was characterized by a cohesive grouping of leaders, fewer authority positions, and generalized leadership.

The community characteristics associated with Oiltown may be considered indicative of a community with numerous vertical ties to extracommunity systems[16] (such as a national manufacturing company, governmental agencies, etc.); this in turn would indicate a community with diversified elements. This diversity of the community denies the leaders' association with each other and, thereby, prevents the cementing of personal relationships. In other words, the power structures of diversified communities are less cohesive possibly due to the absence of opportunities for cooperative associations to develop among its various leaders.

A community with characteristics capable of producing a less cohesive power structure would also produce a power structure that is visible to the community at large. This visibility would result from a competition of interests among the leaders, activity in public affairs by an educated public, and broad economic and political bases within the community.

It is also reasonable to assume that an urbanized community is constituted by many more people who have the same type of problems. These numerous people seek a solution to their problems by presenting those problems to community leaders. This creates a demand for the development of an administrative organization designed to aid or formulate a solution for their problems. Therefore, the more urbanized the community, the greater the number of authority positions found in the power structure. In addition, Vidich and Bensman suggested that frequently these authority positions are bestowed upon the leaders of a small community as an honor.[17] An outstanding leader of the community may be nominated for an office in the context that "it is about time Lee is made president because of everything he's done."[18]

Summary and Conclusions

A modified reputational approach was used to identify the leaders of Oiltown and Farmersville. Analysis of the data yielded the following conclusions: Oiltown's power structure was overt, had more formally constituted power, had slightly less group-like characteristics, and tended to be generalized in scope of influence. Farmersville's power structure was overt, had a more cohesive grouping of leaders representing fewer authority positions, and tended to be generalized in scope of influence.

The visibility of the power structures of four communities was examined in relationship to the communities' characteristics. Oiltown, Farmersville, Indiana City, and Burlington were ranked on the factors isolated by Bonjean, et al. for differentiating communities. A strong relationship was identified

between the visibility of the power structure and three of the five community dimensions. In comparison to Indiana City and Burlington, Oiltown had the highest proportion of visible leaders and also ranked highest on the community characteristics of Socioeconomic Status, Governmental Revenues and Expenditures, and Residential Mobility. Indiana City and Burlington ranked second and third, respectively, both on the proportion of visible leaders and on the same three community characteristics. Thus the findings tentatively support the hypothesis that as the characteristics of a community vary, the visibility characteristic of the power structure also varies. These findings raise the following question: Will communities which rank high on the same community dimensions as Oiltown also possess similar power structure characteristics as Oiltown? The findings of this study suggest that additional similar relationships between power structure characteristics and community characteristics would be found. However, these authors suggest that a larger sample of communities should be studied and that more data (than was available to this study) would be needed to determine the authority positions, cohesiveness, and generality characteristics of the power structures.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a review of the relevant literature, see the following sources. Charles M. Bonjean and David M. Olson, "Community Leadership: Directions of Research," Administrative Science Quarterly, 9 (December, 1964), p. 284. Some studies which use this approach include Delbert C. Miller, "Decision-Making Cliques in Community Power Structures: A Comparative Study of an American and an English City," American Journal of Sociology, 64 (December, 1958), pp. 299-310; Charles M. Bonjean, "Community Leadership: A Case Study and Conceptual Refinement," American Journal of Sociology, 68 (May, 1963), pp. 672-681; A. Alexander Fanelli, "A Typology of Community Leadership Based on Influence and Interaction Within the Leader Subsystem," Social Forces, 34 (May, 1952), pp. 332-338; Delbert C. Miller and James L. Dirksen, "The Identification of Visible, Concealed, and Symbolic Leaders in a Small Indiana City: A Replication of the Bonjean-Noland Study of Burlington, N.C.," Social Forces, 43 (May, 1965), pp. 548-555; Robert E. Agger, "Power Attributions in the Local Community: Theoretical and Research Considerations," Social Forces, 34 (May, 1956), pp. 322-331; Robert O. Schulze and Leonard U. Blumberg, "The Determination of Local Power Elites,"American Journal of Sociology, 63 (November, 1957), pp. 290-296; William D'Antonio and Eugene C. Erickson, "The Reputational Technique as a Measure of Community Power: An Evaluation Based on Comparative and Longitudinal Studies," American Sociological Review, 27 (June, 1962), pp. 362-376.

2. John Walton, "Substance and Artifact: The Current Status of Research on Community Power Structure," American Journal of Sociology, 71 (January, 1966), p. 430.

3. For an elaboration of this point, see James D. Preston, "The Search for Community Leaders: A Re-examination of the Reputational Technique," Sociological Inquiry, 39 (Winter, 1969): 39-47. Also see James D. Preston, "Identification of Community Leaders," Sociology and Social Research 53 (January, 1969): 204-216.

4. The occupational mobility of the community was determined by subtracting the 1940 ratio of $\frac{\text{number of people employed in manufacturing occupations}}{\text{number of people employed in agricultural occupations}}$ from the 1960 ratio of $\frac{\text{number of people employed in manufacturing occupations}}{\text{number of people employed in agricultural occupations}}$.

5. Nelson W. Polsby, "Three Problems in the Analysis of Community Power," American Sociological Review, 24 (December, 1959), pp. 796-803.

6. Charles M. Bonjean, "Community Leadership: A Case Study and Conceptual Refinement," American Journal of Sociology, 47 (May, 1963), pp. 672-681.

7. See Table 4 for the percentage of concealed and symbolic leaders identified in each community.

8. Otis Dudley Duncan and Leo F. Schnore, "Cultural, Behavioral, and Ecological Perspectives in the Study of Social Organization," American Journal of Sociology, 65 (September, 1959), pp. 132-146.

9. Christen T. Jonassen and Sherwood H. Peres, Interrelationships of Dimensions of Community Systems: A Factor Analysis of Eighty-Two Variables (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1960).

10. Charles M. Bonjean, Harley L. Browning, and Lewis F. Carter, "Toward Comparative Community Research: A Factor Analysis of United States Counties," The Sociological Quarterly, 10 (Spring, 1969), pp. 157-176.

11. Data for the community dimensions were collected on a county basis in order to facilitate comparison and standardization. The source of data was U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, 1962 (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962).

12. Bonjean, op. cit.

13. Delbert C. Miller and James L. Dirksen, "The Identification of Visible, Concealed, and Symbolic Leaders in a Small Indiana City: A Replication of the Bonjean-Noland Study of Burlington, North Carolina," Social Forces, 43 (May, 1965), pp. 548-555. French and Aiken also replicated the Bonjean study. The identity of the community they investigated was not known to us at the time of this study; thus a comparative note on community characteristics could not be made. See Robert Mills French and Michael Aiken, "Community Power in Cornucopia: A Replication of the Bonjean Technique of Identifying Community Leaders," The Sociological Quarterly, 9 (Spring, 1968), pp. 261-270.

14. The discussion of the relationship between Farmersville's power structure characteristics and community characteristics will be presented below.

15. For a discussion of the methodological procedures for determining the power structure characteristics of visibility, cohesiveness, authotity positions, and generality or scope of influence, see Chapter V of Danette Spiekerman, "Analysis of Community Power Structure Using the Reputational Approach: A Comparative Analysis of Two Texas Communities," Unpublished M.S. Thesis, College Station: Texas A&M University, August, 1968.

16. A national manufacturing company, governmental agencies, etc. are indicative of a community's vertical ties to extracommunity systems.

17. Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensmen, Small Town in Mass Society, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1958), p. 256.

18. Ibid.